

IMPROVED MEDICAL PROCEDURE

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of Serial No. 09/373,112 filed August 11, 1999 and a continuation-in-part of Serial No. 09/103,342 filed June 23, 1998, which is a continuation-in-part of Serial No. 09/047,012 filed March 24, 1998. Each of these disclosures is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to the use of an intravascular cooling element to induce hypothermia in connection with medical procedures.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] A number of approaches have been developed for treating coronary artery disease. In less severe cases, it is often sufficient to merely treat the symptoms with pharmaceuticals or to treat the underlying causes of the disease with lifestyle modification. In more severe cases, the coronary blockage can be treated endovascularly or percutaneously using techniques such as balloon angioplasty, atherectomy, laser ablation, stents, and the like.

[0004] In cases where these approaches have failed or are likely to fail, it is often necessary to perform a coronary artery bypass graft procedure ("coronary bypass procedure"). In this procedure, direct access to the heart is first achieved. This is usually done by opening the chest by median sternotomy and spreading the left and right rib cage apart. The pericardial sac is then opened to achieve direct access to the heart. Next, a blood vessel or vessels for use in the graft procedure are mobilized from the patient. This usually entails mobilizing either a mammary artery or a saphenous vein, although other graft vessels may also be used.

[0005] A heart-lung or cardiopulmonary bypass is then performed. This procedure usually entails arterial and venous cannulation, connecting the bloodstream to a cardiopulmonary bypass system, cooling the body to about 32 degrees Celsius, cross

clamping the aorta, and cardioplegic perfusion of the coronary arteries to arrest and cool the heart to about 4 degrees Celsius.

[0006] The arrest or stoppage of the heart is generally carried out because the constant pumping motion of the beating heart makes surgery upon the heart difficult. Cooling the body protects the organs from ischemia (a condition in which a tissue or organ does not receive a sufficient supply of blood), reduces the cardiac output requirement, and increases the systemic vascular resistance, which helps maintain perfusion and reduces the cardiopulmonary circuit primary volume.

[0007] Once cardiac arrest is achieved, a graft (or grafts) is attached to the relevant portions of a coronary artery (or arteries) followed by weaning from the cardiopulmonary bypass, restarting the heart, and decannulation. Finally the chest is closed.

[0008] After arresting the heart, the heart muscle, or myocardium, is protected and supported so that it does not suffer cellular or nerve damage that would prevent the heart from working properly when it is started again. There are two important aspects to the process of myocardial protection: (1) reducing the oxygen demand of the heart muscle; and (2) adequately oxygenating the heart muscle and maintaining the proper chemical balance so that cellular damage does not occur. One common technique for doing so is known as cold cardioplegia.

[0009] During this procedure, the coronary arteries must be isolated to prevent reperfusion of the myocardium with warm oxygenated blood from the cardiopulmonary bypass system that would wash out the cardioplegic agent and prematurely start the heart beating again. The most common way to isolate the coronary arteries is by aortic cross clamping, which is normally implemented in the following fashion. Before stopping the heart, the patient is prepared by placement of an arterial cannula and a venous cannula, which are connected to the cardiopulmonary bypass system. The cardiopulmonary bypass system takes over the functions of the heart and the lungs of the patient by pumping and oxygenating the blood while the heart is stopped. Once the cardiopulmonary bypass system is connected and started, the ascending aorta can be cross-clamped to isolate the coronary arteries from the rest of the systemic arterial circulation. Then, cardioplegic arrest is induced by injecting 500-1000 cc of cardioplegic solution into the aortic root

using a needle or cannula which pierces the wall of the ascending aorta upstream of the cross clamp.

[0010] Unfortunately, significant complications may result from such procedures. For example, application of an external cross-clamp to a calcified or atheromatous aorta may cause the release of emboli into the brachiocephalic, carotid or subclavian arteries with serious consequences such as strokes.

[0011] Systems have been proposed in which the aorta is occluded without cross clamping. For example, U.S. Patent No. 5,957,879 describes systems that include an aortic occlusion device having a balloon to occlude the ascending aorta and a lumen to deliver cardioplegic fluid for arresting the patient's heart. The aortic occlusion device replaces the conventional external cross-clamp and is said to reduce the amount of displacement and distortion of the aorta. Nonetheless, distortion is not eliminated, and the risk of emboli release remains present.

[0012] Other complications can arise from the cardiopulmonary bypass system, which includes mechanical blood pumps, an oxygenator, a heat exchanger, blood reservoirs and filters, and several feet of tubing to transport the blood from the patient on the operating table to the heart-lung machine located nearby and back to the patient. Such systems can cause complications due to the exposure of blood to foreign surfaces, which result in the activation of virtually all the humoral and cellular components of the inflammatory response, as well as some of the slower reacting specific immune responses. Other complications from cardiopulmonary bypass include loss of red blood cells and platelets due to shear stress damage. In addition, cardiopulmonary bypass requires the use of an anticoagulant, such as heparin. This may, in turn, increase the risk of hemorrhage. Finally cardiopulmonary bypass sometimes necessitates giving additional blood to the patient. The additional blood, if from a source other than the patient, may expose the patient to blood-borne diseases.

[0013] Due to the risks noted above, others have attempted to perform a coronary artery bypass graft procedure without occluding the aorta and without cardiopulmonary bypass.

[0014] For example, attempts have been made wherein surgery is performed on a

beating heart. The technique of operating on the beating heart, however, is difficult, due to the rapid movement of the heart, and can at present only be applied to single vessel bypassing procedures. Moreover, partial aortic cross clamping is generally implemented, which can dislodge emboli.

[0015] In other reported procedures, surgeons have been experimenting with a technique that involves stopping or nearly stopping the heart and supporting circulation with a small pump positioned in the patient's vasculature (i.e., an intracorporeal pump). See, for example, M. S. Sweeney, "The Hemopump in 1997: A Clinical, Political, and Marketing Evolution", *Ann. Thorac. Surg.*, 1999, Vol. 68, pp. 761-3 in which a coronary bypass procedure is described that uses a Medtronic Hemopump® for circulatory support and the patient's own lungs from oxygenation. Esmolol, a short acting beta-blocker, was administered to make the heart more tranquil during surgery. The interior surface area of the Hemopump is greatly reduced relative to traditional cardiopulmonary bypass systems, reducing the complications of such surfaces.

[0016] Unfortunately, it can be difficult to provide adequate circulation with a pump of this type, increasing the risk of ischemia. Moreover, while many of the dangers associated with cardiopulmonary bypass systems are avoided, certain benefits of such a system are also lost. For example, hypothermia is no longer induced in the patient, which serves to lower oxygen demand and which induces vasoconstriction, supporting perfusion. Each of these effects serves to protect the organs from ischemic damage.

[0017] Still other techniques have been proposed in which the heart is stopped or nearly stopped (e.g., placed in a reversible, temporary heart block) by locally delivering drugs, such as beta-blockers. At the same time, the heart is continuously paced by external pacemaker stimulation. In this way, alternating periods of heartbeat and heart arrest (e.g., up to 15 seconds) can be established, providing the surgeon with short intervals in which he or she can work on a stilled heart without resorting to a pump for supporting circulation. One such system is the TRANSARREST system of Corvascular, Inc., Palo Alto, CA. Still other methods are known in which surgery is facilitated by stopping or slowing the heart though electrical stimulation of the vagus nerve. See, e.g., U.S. Patent Nos. 5,913,876 and 6,006,134.

[0018] Unfortunately, as in the above case wherein the Hemopump supports circulation, these techniques result in less than ideal circulation and do not provide a hypothermic effect, increasing the risk of ischemia.

[0019] Medical procedures are also known in which hypothermia is induced in a conscious or semiconscious person, for example, where hypothermia is induced in a stroke victim to reduce ischemic damage. However, in such patients, hypothermia activates the sympathetic nervous system, resulting in a significant norepinephrine response. Norepinephrine, in turn, binds to beta-receptor sites, including those in the heart, causing the heart to beat harder and more rapidly, frequently resulting in cardiac arrhythmia and increasing the risk of myocardial ischemia. Norepinephrine also causes peripheral vasoconstriction, frustrating relief of patient discomfort, for example, by using heating blankets.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0020] The above and other difficulties associated with the prior art are addressed by the present invention.

[0021] According to a first aspect of the present invention, a coronary bypass procedure is conducted in which the patient's blood is oxygenated with the patient's lungs and in which blood is circulated using the patient's heart or using an intracorporeal pump. The procedure preferably comprises: (a) positioning a heat transfer element in a blood vessel of a patient; (b) cooling the body of the patient to less than 35°C, more preferably 32±2° C, using the heat transfer element; and (c) forming a fluid communicating graft between an arterial blood supply and the coronary artery.

[0022] The body of the patient is desirably heated to about 37 °C using the heat transfer element subsequent to the step of forming the fluid communicating graft.

[0023] Numerous variations are possible. For example, the step of forming a fluid communicating graft between the arterial blood supply and the coronary artery can be performed on a beating heart during bradycardia of the heart that occurs upon cooling the patient's body.

[0024] In another embodiment, the heart can be arrested or nearly arrested during at least a portion of the step of forming the fluid communicating graft. For example, the heart can be chemically arrested (e.g., using one or more beta-blockers), or the heart can be electrically arrested. While heart is arrested, the patient's circulation is preferably supported with a pump positioned in the patient's vasculature. In a preferred embodiment, the pump is at least partially positioned in the left ventricle and is introduced into the patient through the femoral artery.

[0025] In yet another embodiment, the heartbeat is intermittently arrested and stimulated, and at least a portion of the step of forming the fluid communicating graft is carried out during periods of heartbeat arrest. For example, the heart can be chemically arrested (e.g., with one or more beta blockers) and electrically stimulated. Alternatively, the heart can be both electrically arrested and electrically stimulated. In this way, the use of a pump can be avoided.

[0026] The heat transfer element can be positioned, for example, in the venous vasculature, where it is preferably introduced via the femoral vein. More preferably, the heat transfer element is positioned in the inferior vena cava via the femoral vein. In this instance, the heat transfer element is preferably about 4 to 5 mm in diameter.

[0027] In one preferred embodiment, the heat transfer element is attached to the distal end of a flexible catheter, and the catheter is used in the step of positioning the heat transfer element in the blood vessel. The catheter is also used to convey chilled or heated fluid to the interior of the heat transfer element.

[0028] The catheter is desirably configured for efficient heat transfer. As an example, it is preferred that the heat transfer element absorbs at least 150 Watts of heat during cooling. To promote efficient heat transfer, the heat transfer element can comprise a plurality of exterior and interior surface irregularities, wherein the exterior and interior surface irregularities are preferably shaped and arranged to create mixing in the blood and in the fluid within the heat transfer element, respectively. In a preferred embodiment, the interior and exterior surface irregularities comprise one or more helical ridges and one or more helical grooves.

[0029] According to a second aspect of the invention, a hypothermic medical

procedure is provided comprising (a) administering a beta-blocking drug to a patient; (b) delivering a heat transfer element to a blood vessel of a patient; and (c) cooling a region of the patient or the body of the patient to less than 35°C using the heat transfer element while the patient is in a conscious or semiconscious state. Preferably, the beta-blocking drug is administered after delivering the heat transfer element to the blood vessel.

Preferred beta-blocking drugs for this aspect of the invention include β_1 blockers, $\beta_1\beta_2$ blockers, and $\alpha\beta_1\beta_2$ blockers. Preferred β_1 blockers include acebutolol, atenolol, betaxolol, bisoprolol, esmolol and metoprolol. Preferred $\beta_1\beta_2$ blockers include carteolol, nadolol, penbutolol, pindolol, propranolol, sotalol and timolol. Preferred $\alpha\beta_1\beta_2$ blockers include carvedilol and labetalol.

[0030] Advantages of the present invention include the elimination of aortic occlusion and cardiopulmonary bypass systems during coronary bypass surgery.

[0031] Where beating heart procedures are incorporated, another advantage of the present invention is the promotion of a bradycardia of the heart, simplifying surgery.

[0032] Another advantage of the present invention include a reduction in the risk of ischemia associated with techniques that provide circulatory flow rates that are significantly lower than ordinary cardiac output and with techniques incorporating vasodilatory substances.

[0033] Yet another advantage of the present invention is that the risk of cardiac arrhythmia and myocardial ischemia is reduced in connection with medical procedures that induce hypothermia in conscious or semiconscious patients.

[0034] The above and other embodiments and advantages of the invention will become apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art upon reading the description and claims to follow.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0035] Figure 1 is a schematic representation of the use of a heat transfer element to cool the body, according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0036] Figure 2 is an elevation view of a mixing inducing heat transfer element within a blood vessel in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

[0037] Figure 3 is an elevation view of a heat transfer element used in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

[0038] Figure 4 a longitudinal section view of the heat transfer element of Figure 3.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0039] The present invention now will be described more fully hereinafter. This invention may, however, be embodied in different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein.

[0040] According to one aspect of the present invention, a procedure is provided by which a surgeon is able to perform a coronary bypass procedure with hypothermic protection, while at the same time avoiding many of the disadvantages associated with the use of traditional external cardiopulmonary bypass systems and aortic clamping procedures.

[0041] In one embodiment of the present invention, a heat transfer element is provided within a blood vessel of the body such that blood is cooled *in vivo* upon contact with the heat transfer element.

[0042] The heat transfer element can be provided in either arterial or venous blood vessels. One preferred location for the heat transfer element is the inferior vena cava, which typically ranges from 15 mm to 25 mm in diameter. A preferred method by which the heat transfer element is provided at this position is via entry at the femoral vein.

[0043] Figure 1 is a schematic representation of the use of a heat transfer element in cooling the body of a patient. The apparatus shown in Figure 1 includes a working fluid supply 10, preferably supplying a chilled aqueous solution, a supply catheter 12 and a heat transfer element 14. The supply catheter 12 may have a substantially coaxial construction. An inner coaxial lumen within the supply catheter 12 receives coolant from the working fluid supply 10. The coolant travels the length of the supply catheter 12 to the heat transfer element 14 that serves as the cooling tip of the catheter. At the distal end of the heat transfer element 14, the coolant exits an insulated interior lumen and traverses the length of the heat transfer element 14 in order to decrease the temperature of the

surface of the heat transfer element 14. The coolant then traverses an outer lumen of the supply catheter 12 so that it may be disposed of or recirculated. The supply catheter 12 is a flexible catheter having a diameter sufficiently small to allow its distal end to be inserted percutaneously into an accessible blood vessel, shown in Figure 1 as the right femoral vein. The supply catheter 12 is sufficiently long to allow the heat transfer element 14 at the distal end of the supply catheter 12 to be passed through the vascular system of the patient and placed in the blood vessel of interest, here the inferior vena cava. The method of inserting the catheter into the patient and routing the heat transfer element 14 into a selected artery or vein is well known in the art.

[0044] In the embodiment of Figure 1, the narrowest blood vessel encountered by the heat transfer element as it travels to the inferior vena cava is the femoral artery, which generally ranges from 5 to 8 mm in diameter. Accordingly, in this embodiment of the invention, the diameter of the heat transfer element is about 4 to 5 mm in diameter.

[0045] In order to obtain the benefits associated with hypothermia during a coronary bypass procedure, it is desirable to reduce the temperature of the blood flowing within the body to less than 35°C, more preferably between 30 and 35°C, and most preferably 32±2°C. Given a typical blood flow rate of approximately 2.5 to 4 l/min, more typically about 3.5 l/min, in the inferior vena cava, the heat transfer element preferably absorbs 200 to 300 Watts of heat when placed in this vein, in order to induce the desired cooling effect. Approximate cooling time is 15 to 30 minutes.

[0046] Cooling the body to less than 35°C provides a number of desirable effects. First, cooling will induce a bradycardia of the heart. Reduced heart rates corresponding to about 2/3 of the normal heart rate are common at the preferred temperature of 32±2°C. By slowing the beating of the heart, the present invention facilitates surgery during beating heart procedures. Such procedures are well known in the art. For example, the performance of coronary surgery on the beating heart is described by Benetti et al in "Coronary Revascularization With Arterial Conduits Via a Small Thoracotomy and Assisted by Thoracoscopy, Although Without Cardiopulmonary Bypass", Cor. Europatum, 4(1): 22-24 (1995), and by Westaby, "Coronary Surgery Without Cardiopulmonary Bypass" in the March, 1995 issue of the British Heart Journal.

Additional discussion of this subject matter can be found in Benetti et al, "Direct myocardial revascularization without extracorporeal circulation. Experience in 700 patients", Chest, 100(2): 312-16 (1991), Pfister et al, "Coronary artery bypass without cardiopulmonary bypass" Ann. Thorac. Surg., 54:1085-92 (1992), and Fanning et al, "Reoperative coronary artery bypass grafting without cardiopulmonary bypass", Ann. Thorac. Surg., 55:486-89 (1993). Each of the above articles is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0047] Moreover, the general anesthesia associated with coronary bypass techniques is often accompanied by vasodilation in the patient, which decreases organ perfusion and hence increases the risk of ischemia. This effect, however, is combated by the hypothermia induced in accordance with the present invention, which promotes vasoconstriction.

[0048] Cooling the body also protects the organs from ischemic damage due to low circulatory flow rates or due to emboli formation. For example, as previously noted, procedures are known in the art in which (1) the heart is intermittently stopped and restarted or (2) the heart is stopped and a small intracorporeal pump is used to provide circulatory support. These techniques and others like them allow the surgeon to operate on a still or nearly still heart. However, each of these techniques also places the patient at risk from ischemia. By lowering the body temperature of the patient to a preferred temperature of $32\pm2^{\circ}\text{ C}$ in accordance with the present invention, however, the oxygen demand of the bodily tissue, and hence the danger of ischemia associated with these procedures, is reduced.

[0049] More specifically, with some techniques in which alternating periods of heartbeat and heart arrest are provided, the heart is stopped or nearly stopped using drugs such as beta-blockers, and a pacing device is used to cause the heart to beat on demand. An example of one such system is the TRANSARREST system; Corvascular, Inc., Palo Alto, CA. In other techniques, the heart is momentarily stopped or slowed by electrically stimulating the vagus nerve. See, e.g., U.S. Patent Nos. 5,913,876 and 6,006,134, the disclosures of which are hereby incorporated by reference. (As noted in U.S. Patent No. 5,913,876, one or more heart pacing devices, such as a Pace port-Swann pulmonary artery

catheter, may be inserted in conventional fashion to the patient's heart and used to restore the beating of the heart during the surgery, in the event the heart is slow to revive after a nerve stimulating signal is turned off.) Each of these techniques is associated with a circulatory flow rate that can be significantly lower than normal cardiac output.

[0050] The risks of ischemia due to low circulatory flow rates, however, are reduced in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. In particular, before manipulating the heartbeat of the patient, a heat transfer element is inserted into the vasculature of the patient and the body temperature of the patient is reduced, preferably to $32\pm2^\circ\text{ C}$. As noted above, by lowering the body temperature, the body's oxygen demand is reduced, decreasing the risk of ischemia. Moreover, a reduction in body temperature in accordance with the present invention is accompanied by vasoconstriction, which decreases the circulatory flow rate that is required for adequate organ perfusion and consequently further decreases the risk of ischemia.

[0051] The present invention is also useful in connection with techniques in which the heart is stopped or nearly stopped and an intracorporeal pump is used to support circulation. For example, techniques are known in which circulatory support is provided during coronary bypass by a pump positioned in the patient's aortic valve. See, for example, M. S. Sweeney, "The Hemopump in 1997: A Clinical, Political, and Marketing Evolution", *Ann. Thorac. Surg.*, 1999, Vol. 68, pp. 761-3, the entire disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference. In this reference, a coronary bypass operation is described in which esmolol, a short acting beta-blocker, is administered to calm the heart during surgery. A Medtronic Hemopump® is used for circulatory support and the patient's own lungs are used for oxygenation. At the core of the Hemopump is a small, rapidly turning Archimedes screw. The pump assembly is made of stainless steel and is attached to a silicone rubber inlet cannula. The cannula is positioned across the aortic valve and into the left ventricle. The pump assembly is catheter mounted to facilitate placement of the pump in its operating position. For example, the pump assembly is ordinarily inserted into the femoral artery of the thigh, whereupon it is guided to the left ventricle. Once in place, the cannula acts to entrain blood and feeds it to the pump portion, which then pumps the blood into circulation via the aorta. The pump is operated

by the creation of pulsing electromagnetic fields, which cause rotation of a permanent magnet, resulting in operation of the Archimedes screw. Electrical power is provided from a console outside the patient. The pumping action is axial and continuous (i.e., non-pulsatile). Due to the design of the Hemopump, rotational speeds on the order of 10,000 to 20,000 rpm can be used to produce blood flow of about four liters per minute or less (depending on the model) without significant hemolysis. Additional details are found in M.C. Sweeney and O.H. Frazier, "Device-supported myocardial revascularization; safe help for sick hearts", *Ann. Thorac. Surg.* 1992, 54: 1065-70 and U.S. Patent No. 4,625,712, the entire disclosures of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

[0052] This technique and others like it, however, are frequently associated with circulatory flow rates (i.e., about 4 l/min or less) that are lower than normal cardiac output (i.e., about 5 l/min for many people) placing the patient at ischemic risk. By lowering the body temperature of the patient to a preferred range of $32\pm2^\circ\text{ C}$ in accordance with the present invention, however, the blood vessels are constricted and oxygen demand of the bodily tissue is reduced, increasing organ perfusion and reducing the danger of ischemia for a given circulatory output.

[0053] As noted above, in a preferred embodiment of this first aspect of the invention, the heat transfer element is provided in the inferior vena cava, which is accessed via the femoral vein. In contrast, the Hemopump is preferably provided in the left ventricle, which is accessed via the femoral artery. In this way, both the heating element and the Hemopump can be concurrently placed in the body in a minimally invasive fashion.

[0054] According to another aspect of the invention, a hypothermic medical procedure is performed on a patient in a conscious or semiconscious state. An example of a situation where such a hypothermic medical procedure may be performed is one in which a patient has suffered a stroke and hypothermia is induced in the brain to reduce ischemic damage.

[0055] Such procedures can be performed either to cool the entire body of the patient or a region within the patient's body, typically an organ.

[0056] The entire body can be cooled using the procedures discussed above. For

example, the heat transfer element is preferably provided in a venous blood vessel, more preferably the inferior vena cava, to effect cooling of the entire body.

[0057] In order to intravascularly regulate the temperature of a selected region, the heat transfer element may be placed in a feeding artery of the region to absorb or deliver the heat from or to the blood flowing into the region. The heat transfer element should be small enough to fit within the feeding artery while still allowing a sufficient blood flow to reach the region in order to avoid ischemic damage. By placing the heat transfer element within the feeding artery of a region, the temperature of the region can be controlled, while having less effect on the remaining parts of the body. Using the brain as an example, the common carotid artery supplies blood to the head and brain. The internal carotid artery branches off of the common carotid to directly supply blood to the brain. To selectively cool the brain, the heat transfer element is placed into the common carotid artery, or both the common carotid artery and the internal carotid artery. The internal diameter of the common carotid artery ranges from 6 to 8 mm and the length ranges from 80 to 120 mm. Thus, the heat transfer element residing in one of these arteries cannot be much larger than 4 mm in diameter in order to avoid occluding the vessel, which would result, for example, in ischemic damage.

[0058] When hypothermia is induced in a patient, less than desirable side effects can occur in the patient. For example, hypothermia is known to activate the sympathetic nervous system in a conscious or semiconscious patient, resulting in a significant norepinephrine response. Norepinephrine, in turn, binds to beta sites including those in the heart, causing the heart to beat harder and more rapidly, frequently resulting in cardiac arrhythmia and increased risk of myocardial ischemia. In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, however, a beta-blocker is administered to the patient. Without wishing to be bound by theory, it is believed that the beta-blocker offsets the norepinephrine binding noted above. In general, the beta-blocker may be administered before the patient cooling commences, and preferably immediately before patient cooling commences.

[0059] Preferred beta-blockers for this aspect of the invention include β_1 blockers,

$\beta_1\beta_2$ blockers and $\alpha\beta_1\beta_2$ blockers. Preferred β_1 blockers include acebutolol, atenolol, betaxolol, bisoprolol, esmolol and metoprolol. Preferred $\beta_1\beta_2$ blockers include carteolol, nadolol, penbutolol, pindolol, propranolol, sotalol and timolol. Preferred $\alpha\beta_1\beta_2$ blockers include carvedilol and labetalol.

[0060] The heightened demand that hypothermia places on the heart of conscious or semiconscious patients may also be relieved, for example, with heating blankets. However, vasoconstriction limits the heating ability of the heating blankets. Without wishing to be bound by theory, it is believed that the above-noted production of norepinephrine activates alpha-receptors, for example, in the peripheral blood vessels, causing this vasoconstriction. The vasoconstriction can be offset, in accordance with the present invention, by treating the patient with alpha-blockers when indicated, preferably before cooling is initiated. Preferred alpha-blockers include labetalol and carvedilol.

[0061] In the various embodiments of the invention, once the medical procedure is completed, the heat transfer element is preferably used to warm the body back to its normal temperature, i.e., 37 °C.

[0062] Regarding the construction of the heat transfer element, this component is ideally a flexible element, allowing it to be placed at the desired vascular position. For example, the element often has to be passed through a series of one or more venous or arterial branches, making flexibility an important characteristic of the heat transfer element.

[0063] Further, the heat transfer element is ideally constructed from a highly thermally conductive material such as metal or very thin plastics or polymers, in order to facilitate heat transfer. The use of a highly thermally conductive material increases the heat transfer rate for a given temperature differential between the fluid within the heat transfer element and the blood. Highly thermally conductive materials, such as metals, tend to be rigid. Therefore, the design of the heat transfer element should facilitate flexibility in an inherently inflexible material.

[0064] In general, the magnitude of the heat transfer rate is proportional to the surface area of the heat transfer element, the temperature differential, and the heat transfer coefficient of the heat transfer element.

[0065] Diameter, and hence surface area, of the heat transfer element is limited to avoid significant obstruction of the vein or artery and to allow the heat transfer element to easily pass through the vascular system. As noted above, for placement within the inferior vena cava, the cross sectional diameter of the heat transfer element is about 4-5 mm. For placement in the internal carotid artery, the cross sectional diameter is about 2 to 3.5 mm. Typically, the length of the heat transfer element for this purpose is about 10 to 30 cm.

[0066] When used in cooling mode, decreasing the surface temperature of the heat transfer element can increase the temperature differential. However, the minimum allowable surface temperature is limited by the characteristics of blood. Blood freezes at approximately 0°C. When the blood approaches freezing, ice emboli may form in the blood that may lodge downstream, causing serious ischemic injury. Furthermore, reducing the temperature of the blood also increases its viscosity, which results in a small decrease in the value of the convection heat transfer coefficient. In addition, increased viscosity of the blood may result in an increase in the pressure drop within the artery or vein, thus compromising the flow of blood to the organs. Given the above constraints, it is advantageous to limit the minimum allowable surface temperature of the heat transfer element to approximately 5° C. This results in a maximum temperature differential between the blood stream and the heat transfer element of approximately 32° C when the heat transfer device is used in cooling mode.

[0067] Similarly, when in heating mode, increasing the surface temperature of the heat transfer element can increase the temperature differential. Analogous to cooling, however, the maximum allowable surface temperature is limited by the characteristics of blood. In particular, damage to blood components can occur at temperatures of about 45-48° C and above. Accordingly, it is advantageous to limit the maximum allowable surface temperature of the heat transfer element to approximately 44° C. This results in a maximum temperature differential between the blood stream and the heat transfer element of approximately 7° C when the heat transfer device is used in heating mode.

[0068] The mechanisms by which the value of the convection heat transfer

coefficient may be increased are complex. However, it is well known that the convection heat transfer coefficient increases with the level of turbulent kinetic energy in the fluid flow. Thus it is advantageous to have turbulent or mixing blood flow in contact with the heat transfer element.

[0069] Specifically, creating a turbulent boundary layer on the heat transfer element surface can increase the heat transfer rate. In the event that a smooth heat transfer element is used, turbulence normally occurs in a very thin boundary layer, producing only a small amount of turbulent kinetic energy and resulting in less than optimal heat transfer. Therefore, to induce increase turbulent kinetic energy (and thus to increase the heat transfer rate), a stirring mechanism that abruptly changes the direction of velocity vectors is preferably utilized. This can create high levels of turbulence intensity in the free stream (and not just the boundary layer), thereby sufficiently increasing the heat transfer rate. If the flow of blood is continuous (non-pulsatile) flow (such as encountered in venous flow), this turbulence or mixing intensity should be maintained at all times. In the event that blood flow is pulsatile flow (such as is encountered in arterial flow), the mixing intensity should be maintained over a majority of the pulsatile period (e.g., the cardiac cycle).

[0070] To create the desired level of mixing intensity in the blood free stream, in one preferred embodiment, the heat transfer element is provided with a modular design. This design creates helical blood flow and produces a high level of mixing in the free stream by periodically forcing abrupt changes in the direction of the helical blood flow. Figure 2 is a perspective view of such a mixing inducing heat transfer element within a blood vessel. Mixed flow is indicated at point 114, in the free stream area. The abrupt changes in flow direction are achieved through the use of a series of two or more heat transfer segments, each comprised of one or more helical ridges.

[0071] The use of periodic abrupt changes in the helical direction of the blood flow in order to induce strong free stream turbulence or mixing may be illustrated with reference to a common clothes washing machine. The rotor of a washing machine spins initially in one direction causing laminar flow. When the rotor abruptly reverses

direction, significant turbulent kinetic energy is created within the entire washbasin as the changing currents cause random turbulent motion within the clothes-water slurry.

[0072] Figure 3 is an elevation view of one embodiment of a heat transfer element 14. The heat transfer element 14 is comprised of a series of elongated, articulated segments or modules 20, 22, 24. Three such segments are shown in this embodiment, but one or more such segments could be used without departing from the spirit of the invention. As seen in Figure 3, a first elongated heat transfer segment 20 is located at the proximal end of the heat transfer element 14. A mixing-inducing exterior surface of the segment 20 comprises four parallel helical ridges 38 with four parallel helical grooves 26 therebetween. One, two, three, or more parallel helical ridges 38 could also be used. In this embodiment, the helical ridges 38 and the helical grooves 26 of the heat transfer segment 20 have a left hand twist, referred to herein as a counter-clockwise spiral or helical rotation, as they proceed toward the distal end of the heat transfer segment 20.

[0073] The first heat transfer segment 20 is coupled to a second elongated heat transfer segment 22 by a first bellows section 25, which provides flexibility and compressibility. The second heat transfer segment 22 comprises one or more helical ridges 32 with one or more helical grooves 30 therebetween. The ridges 32 and grooves 30 have a right hand, or clockwise, twist as they proceed toward the distal end of the heat transfer segment 22. The second heat transfer segment 22 is coupled to a third elongated heat transfer segment 24 by a second bellows section 27. The third heat transfer segment 24 comprises one or more helical ridges 36 with one or more helical grooves 34 therebetween. The helical ridge 36 and the helical groove 34 have a left hand, or counter-clockwise, twist as they proceed toward the distal end of the heat transfer segment 24. Thus, successive heat transfer segments 20, 22, 24 of the heat transfer element 14 alternate between having clockwise and counterclockwise helical twists. The actual left or right hand twist of any particular segment is immaterial, as long as adjacent segments have opposite helical twist.

[0074] In addition, the rounded contours of the ridges 38, 32, 36 also allow the heat transfer element 14 to maintain a relativelyatraumatic profile, thereby minimizing the possibility of damage to the blood vessel wall.

[0075] The bellows sections 25,27 are formed from seamless and nonporous materials, typically metals such as nickel, copper, etc. The structure of the bellows sections 25, 27 allows them to bend, extend and compress, which increases the flexibility of the heat transfer element 14 so that it is more readily able to navigate through blood vessels. The bellows sections 25, 27 also provide for axial compression of the heat transfer element 14, which can limit the trauma when the distal end of the heat transfer element 14 abuts a blood vessel wall. The bellows sections 25, 27 are also able to tolerate cryogenic temperatures without a loss of performance.

[0076] It may be desirable to treat the surfaces of the heat transfer element 14 to avoid clot formation. In particular, one may wish to treat the bellows sections 25, 27 because stagnation of the blood flow may occur in the convolutions, thus allowing clots to form and cling to the surface to form a thrombus. One means by which to prevent thrombus formation is to bind an antithrombogenic agent to the surface of the heat transfer element 14. For example, heparin is known to inhibit clot formation and is also known to be useful as a biocoating. Alternatively, the surfaces of the heat transfer element 14 may be bombarded with ions such as nitrogen. Bombardment with nitrogen can harden and smooth the surface and thus prevent adherence of clotting factors to the surface.

[0077] Figure 4 is a longitudinal sectional view of the heat transfer element 14 of an embodiment of the invention, taken along line 5-5 in Figure 3. Some interior contours are omitted for purposes of clarity. An inner tube 42 creates an inner coaxial lumen 42 and an outer coaxial lumen 46 within the heat transfer element 14. Once the heat transfer element 14 is in place in the blood vessel, a working fluid such as saline or other aqueous solution may be circulated through the heat transfer element 14. Fluid flows up a supply catheter into the inner coaxial lumen 40. At the distal end of the heat transfer element 14, the working fluid exits the inner coaxial lumen 40 and enters the outer lumen 46. As the working fluid flows through the outer lumen 46, heat is transferred from the working fluid to the exterior surface 37 of the heat transfer element 14, or vice versa. Because the heat transfer element 14 is constructed from a high conductivity material, the temperature of its exterior surface 37 may reach very close to the temperature of the working fluid.

The tube 42 may be formed as an insulating divider to thermally separate the inner lumen 40 from the outer lumen 46. For example, insulation may be achieved by creating longitudinal air channels in the wall of the insulating tube 42. Alternatively, the insulating tube 42 may be constructed of a non-thermally conductive material like polytetrafluoroethylene or some other polymer.

[0078] The same mechanisms that govern the heat transfer rate between the exterior surface 37 of the heat transfer element 14 and the blood also govern the heat transfer rate between the working fluid and the interior surface 38 of the heat transfer element 14. The heat transfer characteristics of the interior surface 38 are particularly important when using water, saline or other fluid that remains a liquid as the coolant. Other coolants such as Freon undergo nucleate boiling and create turbulence through a different mechanism. Saline is a safe coolant because it is non-toxic, and leakage of saline does not result in a gas embolism, which could occur with the use of boiling refrigerants. Since turbulence or mixing in the coolant is enhanced by the shape of the interior surface 38 of the heat transfer element 14, the coolant can be delivered to the heat transfer element 14 at a warmer temperature and still achieve the necessary heat transfer rate.

[0079] Further details and embodiments concerning the heat transfer element design and operation can be found in commonly assigned WO 99/48449, the complete disclosure of which is incorporated by reference.

[0080] Although the present invention has been described with respect to several exemplary embodiments, there are many other variations of the above-described embodiments that will be apparent to those skilled in the art. It is understood that these variations are within the teaching of the present invention, which is to be limited only by the claims appended hereto.